Mount Voices

A Literary Magazine

2005-06

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This original printing features a unique watercolor cover hand-painted by Dara Halperin and Marielos Zeka.

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A Journal of Poetry and Prose

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A Journal of Poetry and Prose

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Editors

Vanessa Bravo
Dara Halperin
Marisa Smith
Marielos Zeka

Mount St Mary's College ◆ Los Angeles

Mount Voices is an annual publication of Mount St. Mary's College. It features the work of Mount St. Mary's undergraduates, non-traditional students, alumnae, faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as writers from across the nation. All works belong to the individual authors. No works may be reprinted without the permission of the individual authors. For current submission policies, please send a query with a self-adressed, stamped envelope to the attention of Marcos McPeek Villatoro, English Department. Questions or comments via e-mail may be directed to:
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Foreword

Mount Voices is a labor of love. The contributing writers have given us pieces of their souls crafted from imagination and submitted with humility. The editors have worked to maintain the vision and artistry of the authors' efforts, collecting perspectives of social justice, progressive thinking, and sometimes blunt contemporary critiques. Several of the pieces may shock you with their raw energy, graphic images and less traditional modes. Others will remind you of the beauty, joy and pure wonder that a new day, a new love or a new life can bring.

This edition of Mount Voices is filled with emotion. Our editing staff paid particular attention to exploring the visceral expression presented in one piece and balancing it with a measured dose of compassion or humor or hope in the next. The collection is designed to represent a range of viewpoints and sentiments without insisting on a single theme or topic.

After the individual pieces were chosen, we were challenged by the variety of styles and subject matter. The diversity made it difficult to put the collection together as one cohesive unit. That is, until we discovered the vein that flowed through the whole collection: passion. Each authors' offering is laced with, emits or surrounds what it means to be passionate- the ineffable intersection of power, awe and love.

There are a considerable number of works included that offer a darker perspective on our culture. We see this as an expression of the volatile world in which we live and an attempt to grapple with the inconsistencies and contradictions that frustrate the sensitive observations of the poet. We salute the authors' fearless vulnerability in their portrayal of the human condition.

The Editors

Since You Asked

Bob Reith

When my 5 year-old daughter Alexandra was sick you asked me "How's it going?" Earnest. Somber. Heartfelt. I didn't answer your question. Instead I gave you an itinerary of upcoming events. "They're going to do a spinal tap to determine if the cancer has spread . . . " and off I went, sounding like the doctors I spoke with 20 minutes before. I told you what was happening, not how it was going. That answer takes time - time to comprehend and time to articulate. One thing I've learned is that a brain tumor appears quickly, but the understanding comes later.

At the hospital my wife, Margaret, and I would take shifts - Alexandra was never alone in the hospital. Never. Not once. You can put that on my tombstone if you have trouble coming up with something. Anyways, about that unanswered question - I'd work on my answer after my hospital vigil - on the drive home from Children's Hospital, up the Hollywood Freeway, to our home in The Valley.

On that drive home, I'd write in my head. Then, after I put my son Jack to bed, I'd type my answers. Sob. Go to bed. Get up. Go to the hospital. Repeat. My answers emerged as short poems. Episodic glimpses of myself to myself.

It started innocently enough. Alex woke up one morning in January and complained of a headache and threw up 15 minutes later. Not a big deal, but odd. Happened again a few days later, and into the pediatrician we went. "Could be migraines or stress, but if it happens again call me."

I knew Alex was sick on Super Bowl Sunday. At halftime we went outside to play football. Jack and I threw the ball around. Alex usually played the blitzing linebacker

who loved to blindside me with ferocious hugs. Not today. She was quiet. Jack and I got caught up in acting out some highlight reel from our heads. As I eluded the invisible, blitzing linebacker, I turned to make the game-winning touchdown pass to Jack in the end zone. That's when I spotted Alex. Asleep on the driveway.

The next day, Monday, a month after Alex first threw up, her right eye became dramatically crossed. We got an appointment with the ophthalmologist for Tuesday. Margaret took her. I was at work.

When you have kids, you can tell there's bad news from your spouse - she's upbeat, but in a controlled way.

I answer my cell phone:

> "Yes, hi honey, we're at the doctor's and he wants us to take Alex to the emergency room at Children's right way. So why don't you meet us there now?"
>
> "Honey?"
>
> "Okay, Alex is right here with me, she and I are going now, and you can call the doctor back. Bye, see you soon."

Click.

I dial 411, get connected.

> "Doctor . . . ?"
>
> "Mr. Rieth?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> "Your daughter probably has a brain tumor, you should go right now to the emergency room."

I focus on making sure I get to the hospital.

As I said earlier, when I first began to write about the experience of Alex's brain tumor, I'd write. What follows is that story as I wrote it. It's the answer to your question. At the hospital, as we waited for her surgery to be scheduled, I thought of times we would spend at the park. Alex can be sassy, and I dreamed of those times.

It's a park near our house

I dream
I'm asleep
at Beeman
A baseball glove
covers my face
"Daddy!"
Fast, False, Funny
Glove off
Above me
You float
"When did you learn that trick?"
Sigh
"I'm five you know"
THWACK!
The ball on the bat
Awake
There you are
I cross the room
Not walking
Gliding
Epiphany.
Suspended
by the magic
of you

We live in Los Angeles. From some of the windows of the hospital you can see the world-famous HOLLYWOOD sign. Early on, I hoped the diagnosis was a mistake, or a bad, stupid dream that can be made ok, a TV show perhaps . . . here's the episode I hoped for.

Hollywood, MD

In tonight's episode
I play a doctor
whose hard drive is halted

my daughter is sick, a rare illness
not seen since 1979
on Trapper John, MD
On her ward -
the very best that modern tv medicine can offer
Jane Seymour, head of surgery
Tom Selleck, pediatrician and
Dodgers relief pitcher
Tom Skerritt, former boy wonder -
now he runs the show
And . . . Michael Richards as the
disorderly orderly
I check my watch
it's 10 to the hour
time to wrap this up
Holding the phone
I page the ward
"Deus ex machina - STAT!"
A whirl ensues
Insight, Intervention, Salvation
Final scene
Freeze frame
Laughing, Smiling, Leaving
Just in time
for the new car commercial
to air at the top of the hour

The surgeon. Gordon McComb. He tells us the surgery was a "complete and total resection". At the time, I didn't know he had given us great news. When we meet again to review Alex's case, I hand this to him, and turn away as I feel my eyes well shut.

The Galleria doesn't have anything
Trust me,
I looked.
Hallmark doesn't have a card

for this
The absence of convenience
compels me
I write to you
        You give
your gifts
        time
        compassion
        hope
To her
To me
To our family
My gratitude,
infinite.
yet,
inadequate

ICU. Here you wait and listen. You wait for the doctors to arrive. You listen to the respirator, and to the hushed tones of the nurses who know you are eavesdropping. When the doctors arrive I try to participate and make a contribution. They humor me. Their presence is hope. Then they move on.

February something, 627AM

Awake
All night
I wait.
The team arrives.
We talk
The illusion
        She is their only patient
takes shape
Fleeting, but
        to a father

who waits
for the patient
to become
his little girl
once again
Everything

Every day children are in hospitals. Hospitals are especially quiet at night. Until Alex got sick I never really thought about it, but every night children spend the night in hospitals. They don't go home at the end of the day. There all night, often alone.

Tonight at 11

When the anesthesia
of daylight
wears off
if you listen,
the sound
of childhood
in remission
can be heard

Rehab. After the surgery, before the chemo and radiation, Alex began her recovery. She couldn't speak. Couldn't walk. The rehab wing at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles is called 6 North. The white linoleum floors are unique -white with brightly-colored crescents: hospital clean with a dash of hope. I'd walk up and down those hallways to PT and OT as Alex struggled back.

Very special linoleum
Hallowed ground
these hallways are to me
Here
my daughter's odyssey
back

to herself
and
beyond
to who she will
become
began

That's the story. So now when people ask me "How's it going?" I say "Alex is doing great. Me too. She's my little girl once again."

I also wanted to let you know that tomorrow is a special day - I'm donating Alex's superhero cape to The Smithsonian.

A Gerontology Degree

Jennifer Negrete

What can you study about old people?
They ask me where are you going to work with that degree?
I muse at their questions and think to myself
In their minds, older people are placed on a shelf.
What they don't know is how rich and warm older people can be.
And maybe one day...they'll wish more people would have a gerontology degree.

Post-Humanistly

Marielos Zeka

In my post-humanist life
I wish to be revered for
Splashes of color
Juxtaposed bodies
Contorted masses held high
Against a moon-light mountain

This body decomposed
Bending and breaking
One thousand times
Spaciously drawn to brazen sun
Will allow the Earth to rock me to sleep
This life was a distraction to me

Kept me from seeing
Mahogany porches
Linear buttresses
The Ceiling of the Sistine
Relics of Imaginary Fairies
The spread of an epidemic

Pre-humanistly
I must have been
Pneumatic narcolepsy
Treble clefted symphonies
Brain contusions and
The fake after-birth
Splattered sex on elevator interiors

Rolled up tight
I'll be iconoclastic
The top of hierarchical entablatures
Iron platted façade of Museum House
Sickly one-way street sign
Wicked pigmentation, nothing but a patina

These pieces will be the placebo
The words tailored perfectly
To suit future connoisseurs
Multi-billion dollar assholes
Bad taste and misunderstanding
Publicized lies replicating
I will be revolutionized post-humanistly

My meaning coup d'etated
Placed up the rectums of critics
Mass execution of my eyes
Seared into Technicolor fallacies
Lost in pages, nailed to a mind
Unfit for oily asbestos
I'll be like the stain on your shirt:
A cathartic reminder of your fuck-ups

The Greek-Italian-Indian-Venezuelan-Jew

Emily Paulson

When I was sixteen I worked for Eckerd Drug Store as a cashier. This put me in contact with hundreds of bored rich white women who, upon meeting me, switched from the old game of "pester Bill the pharmacist" to the new game of "guess Emily's heritage". As I was ringing up their items they would make casual remarks about the curls in my hair and how they weren't quite kinky and not too coarse but they were so "wild" and "almost ethnic" (whatever that means). It was my complexion that threw them off the most. "You have lovely rosy skin. Do you take after your mother or your father?" Others would try to compare me to people they knew of other nationalities with more brown complexions. "You look just like my cousin. You're Greek right?" They were subtle and chose their words carefully so as not to offend me but after three months on the job I knew what they were after. I learned to tease them with the information. Sometimes it was two visits before they either got frustrated and asked, "Ok so what are you?" or I finally told them the crazy mixing of countries that made me.

It was strange, but they were never satisfied once I answered. Some would accuse me of hiding my real ethnicity and others just thought I was misinformed. "Are you sure? But you're so fair. I've never met a light skinned Mexican . . .do you mean Venezuelan?" After a while I got tired of arguing and started just saying, "Yes, my mother is Italian" Or "You're right, 100% Greek". It was easier that way and they always left so pleased with themselves. The truth was I didn't really know who I was culturally or what I could identify with. My laundry list of components never defined who I was.

What does English, Danish, German, Mexican and Scots-Irish really make anyway? A snobby, meticulous, alcoholic Catholic with a hot temper, and a knack for making tamales? Those stereotypes don't really mesh well and it would be even more confusing for those women if I sat them down and told them of my struggles between identifying with my Mexican family or my white family and the constant feeling of never fitting in with either group. They just wanted to compartmentalize me before they started to pick me apart into neat little categories of traits that will make me eligible to either marry their son or clean their house. Many of them ended up trying to fix me up with their sons or nephews while the others just lost interest.

These women were only a mild irritation compared to what I had been putting myself through. I thought that I had to be one ethnicity or the other: brown or white. When I was five my white grandmother spent an hour in the bathroom with me trying to scrub the dark areas around the nail beds of my hands convinced that it was dirt and not pigment. We did this at least once during every visit and by the time I was ten I hated my hands. When the scrubbing didn't work I started staying out of the sun for months at a time and took long milk baths. I dyed chunks of my thick black hair red, straightened the curls and looked into buying green contacts. My relationship with my mother started to deteriorate because she hated that I was trying to look like my father's family. I didn't realize that when I lamented the olive tones in my skin I was rejecting her and her family. I was the daughter who looked like a Romero, who represented the identity she thought was erased when she became a Paulson. Trying desperately to fit in was making me crazy and I eventually just gave up. When I was fifteen I threw away the nail brush, stopped dying my

hair and went back into the sun.

Now my behavior seems crazy to me but I can see why I reacted this way. Part of it came from living in a WASP-y Florida town where there was nothing between white and black and my beigeness was a curiosity. Mostly it came from being rejected by my Mexican family. The Romero's ostracized my sister and me because my mother was the rebel who married the old white guy, leaving my sister with blonde hair and blue eyes and me not brown enough to be one of them. Neither of us were baptized and my grandpa's favorite joke on his heathen granddaughters was, "I can't take you to church, Mija, I don't want you to catch on fire." I was sixteen before I stopped hesitating at the doors of Catholic churches. After a while I got tired of being left out and getting teased about my gringo father and his inability to eat jalapenos. Now when the joking gets out of hand I simply say something like, "By the way Tia, how is Carlos' drug problem coming along? Is he still living on your couch?" I don't get invited to many family parties anymore.

My Mexican family is not the only culprit. My other grandfather is a bit of a racist who remembers the good old days when Los Angeles was white, a family of four could be supported on a buck-twenty an hour and little girls wore starched lace. Our visits are usually cut short when he goes into his angry "Damn Mexicans" tirade. I have to remind him by raising my arm, pointing to my tan skin and saying "Uh Grandpa. In case you forgot. I'M BROWN." "Hell you're not that brown. That's just your parents talking. Damned liberal hippies, you can all go jump in the lake for all I care. Anyways the Romero's weren't wetbacks, I know Martin owned a house. That's a different thing altogether." At this point

I usually high-kick out of the room with my arm raised in a mock hail Hitler position. I haven't managed to control my anger gracefully yet but I'm learning. Now when strangers ask me "So, what are you?" I say something like "Democrat. What about you?" I know that none of the lists or long explanations of my parent's crazy backgrounds will sufficiently define who or what I am so I just leave it at that. I've stopped trying to win the Romero's approval or wishing I could fit into the neat classifications that society has for people. I just check the little box that says "other" and am on my way.

This Really Happened

Yahtina Nayale Macali

Four boys were shot down their brains splattered across black hot asphalt

Outside my house

One boy was blown out of his one hundred dollar tennis shoes

That night the news did a five-minute showcase on an albino cow born in India

Then a 10-minute showcase on the mental enhancing effects of cumin and curry

Their mothers wail in my backyard. Funeral processions of middle school children

While this plastic fake tit reporter reports silicone issues

There is a gang war between Mexican and Black children

18 don't like us, maybe they feel better about themselves because they're a shade lighter

They kill us, they rape us

A boy was shot in the face in the McDonald's playpen

This really happened

His soul walked away unknown and forgotten

Sorrowful mothers weeping sisters

Jail or death that's the choice for my little brothers

My friends who I have loved my whole little life

My boys who sang to me

Threw rocks at my window when my mother was sleeping

Called me every night, carried my books

Picked me up from school, chased away my fears

Protected me from the crazy 18 because they like to snatch café con leche girls(You know)

Drove me in their souped up cutlass and shiny rims to wherever I chose

Told me all there secrets trusted me with everything

Believed in my dreams

Gave me a smile

The ones who live

Rot in prison

But the rich man who killed my brother got probation

This really happened

Tiempo

Denise Resendez

Para mi padre

El tiempo marcha adelante
Mostrándose inapacible e invencible.
La niña se convierte en mujer y
El hombre más fuerte de su mundo envejece.
Los años se hacen saber presentes
En las líneas que se hunden en su cara.
Las manos que sostienen la familia
Cada día se hacen más frágiles y
El cansancio que logró escapar
Por tantos años lo va alcanzando.
El trote del tiempo no se deja detener
Por nada ni nadie...
Ni por padres e hijas.

for a child beauty queen

Yahtina Macali

This beautful child
Her mother dressed her in white, with Shirley Temple curls, patent leather shoes, and a golden crucifix
you see the crucifix protects her, the mother thought
Never happy but dreadfully pretty
She is the little girl that always cries
People never see the tears because they never look in her eyes
They marvel at the chiffon in her dress, the gleam in her hair, the ruffles, the ribbons
Everyone holds that beautiful child
No one notices that she doesn't react, doesn't smile
Placid
Bland
She always knew if she could hide inside that white dress, behind those curls.
Nothing could hurt her anymore.
but today nothing has come and gone,
and she is strong, stronger than that fear.
but that beautiful litte girl is still crying.

Choices

Vanessa Bravo

What they say is not true. We have a right to be together. You and I against the world. Screams. All along the streets, on the television, in the papers, and the Internet. The lips of the masses, of the would-be protectors. It's spreading, this germ, this virus. A disease, a threat, a sickness, an abomination. This is our love. "It is different because you can't choose the color of your skin, but you can choose who you take into your bedroom." "Choose" implies a choice, a conscious decision to choose a life outside of normality; to choose, of my own will, to walk a path where I will be unaccepted, where I will be hated, where I will watch my brothers and sisters being raped, beaten, and murdered, all the while wondering if I am next; a life where I will fight every day to justify my love and my right to protect that love. Does anyone willingly choose such a life? "Choose" implies the possibility of change. I will not change. Not because I choose not to, but because I can't. Because this is who I am. This is how I was born, no different from Sheena, Madeline, or any of my other blood who walk this path. I cannot be rehabilitated. The very essence of my being, my genetic code. This is what kills them, the mob, that I am a woman who loves women not because I was raped or molested, not because I was betrayed by a man, but because I simply do. Because I noticed girls before I noticed boys. Because the sound of a woman in the heat of passion stirred in me what a man never could. Because the only person I want to love, honor, cherish, and obey above myself, is a woman. Scream all you want. I know the truth. These women, strong voices, married after 51 years together. 51! Only the truest and most honest of love can hold two souls together for so long. How many of you are married past the standard of ten?

"Should I Bite My Tongue?"

Amparo Hernandez

Should I bite my tongue and let you watch the blood drip?
Or shall I stab you with my eyes?
Yes, I'll strangle you with my dead touch.
What we once had was not good enough.
So maybe I ought to offer you this much:
Should I suggest you peel this skin from me,
Since it seemed to disgust you quite enough?
Should I watch your hair burn?
Well, why not? You were able to turn and watch my heart burst.
Where should I dig my nails in first? Tell me
Oh perfect one. . .since you left me with this curse.

Clouds

Jenni Hernandez

Image in the sky-

Shifting metamorphosis,

Distorted portrait.

Ch'row da Ack

Tiare Kaolelopono

My madda was telling me da odda day, "You know Tia, time's is changing. Pau already er'ebody's morals, da generations goin' get mo' worse. Das au'ryte. As long me and Daddy pono yooh guys-yooh guys all good. Ke Akua take kea' us." She's right. Dey wen' change so much dat kids nowdays getting bribes fo' dere grades. Lemme ask yooh guys one question. Yooh eva met da kine people la'dat who no more no kine appreciation watsoeva? Or da kine friends yooh like fo' real kine slap cuz dey only take-take-take and no expect fo' give not-ten? Or maybe yooh know somebody who is the worst kind kid to dere madda and fadda. Dey da one's mout' off Buggahs stay pepe'ao kuli Hawaiians say, no listen and mout' off fo' e're small ting cuz dey no like do da dishes or go store fo' eggs and cigarettes. But still get tings handed to dem on one silvah plattah. I talkin' place setting, ch'ree kine fork, two kine glass. Da works!! Well lemme tell yooh something. Ever since my madda made me change high school to Pleasantville, majority of da Junyahs (Jr's) I met here was raised la'-dat. Promise!!! C'mon brah, no tell me yooh neva know bout dem. Well, you goin' hear em right round da time report cards bout fo' roll out.

"Damn Dick, that sucks your dad said to get a 2.0 or else you won't be able to get the $1000 and trade in your 2004 Civic for a 2005," said Tom.

"Dude, I know! Mrs. Maeyoshimoto better give me that C he's only gonna give me like the $1000," said Dick.

"Bummer, your life totally sucks man. I'm glad my parents just give it to me regardless because they know I'm

the master of the house," said Harry.

Boo hoo! How you gonna ack?! In my ohana if you come home wit good grades, you get one, "Good job Bebe, I sooo proud of you," while I get big hugs. "Keep up da good work, ok?! You know how, ahh?" As I look at my madda like, "How I know how, ma?" And it starts, "No look at me la'dat yooh fricken kee'd?! Hakum yooh no clean up da house befo' I get home?! I even wen' call yooh from work and yooh wen' lie to me tell me yooh almos' pau! Rice not even pau cook and yo' fadda comin' home already! Get yo' ass movin', NOW! No get wise wit me," Fhh't-Whaap! on da back of my neck. Sheesh, if yooh tink das bad, get mo' of dat kine stuff if I ack up, mout' off, get bad grades, or come home afta dusk and ch'ree whistles. But mo' loud. Needless to say, $1000 and one new ka'a not part of da deal. You suppose to bring home dat kine.

But yo know wat? Da parents da frickin' stupid ones. On top ackin all taran-taran and bringin home D's and F's, dem still give da kee'd dis yea'z brand new tricked-out fully loaded Civic. So loaded dey practially built em like one of dem toy models Junyah get in his closet collecting dust. Fancy Japan imported body kit, spoilahs and exhaust system glidin' on 25" spinnahs gleamin' in da Kalakaua Ave. streetlights. Ten speakahs, six stay in da mini-coffin next to da tweedahs and amp, 5 LCDs personalized to each passengah, stay equipped wit DVD, TiVo and theatre surround sound systems complete wit remote and OnStar. Oh! Let's not forget da OnStar. Odda wise how yooh figga Junyah goin eva find his way back to Pleasantville from Waiks? Brah, I stay outta breaf wala'au bout dis kine ka'a. But yooh can bet yo' plate lunch dat Junyah's madda and fadda goin' bus' dey ass ch'row bags fo' Hawaiian and make da switchboard

fo' Sheraton way pass da age can collect social security. Or maybe all of his fadda's pension stay goin' fo' payments? In da end, dey all not goin' benefit. You try figga, all da money spent to make Junyah look god wit his technosexual lifestyle, soon run dere ohana brok'. Junyah prob'ly one "no-mo'-job'having'lazy-ass-spend-money-like-wadda-neva-goin'-apply-fo'-school-until-my-madda-do-em-fo'-me" kine guy. Which means wit da kine grades da parents stay praising him for, Harvard, Brown or Yale won't be admitting da Summa Cum Laude, valedictorian of da yea....(drum roooolll pleeeeze!) JUNYAH, from Hawai'i's very own PHS e're-body!!! Standing ovation, please! Chee, mo bettah chance yooh hear me pass my silent bombs at one concert. And guess wea he goin be living five yea's afta graduation wen' I stay up Bigland, degree in hand? Wit his parents, in da same house wit da same morals and values since hanabuddahs.

Some of yoohz out dea, maybe not from Hawai'i might be tinkin' to yo'self, "Dis Kanak' she only wen' write dis cuz Hawaiians dumb and jealous." Well Hon'nay, I get some words fo' yooh...
It may seem to you that my primitive and 'textbook abusive' childhood did not allow for the highly privileged "American Dream" type lifestyle aspired and spoon fed to many from conception. Rather the education, demeanor and versatility taught to me via commensurable means and deep rooted morals in the Hawaiian culture would suffice justly for satirical comments. Assuming that you know, *it's all in da ack Bebe*.

Words To Live By

Hana Abuershaid

Ageism,
Anti-Semitism,
Bias, Bigotry,
Discrimination,
Hate crimes, Hate incidents,
Homophobia,
Prejudice, Racism &
Sexism.

Call it what you want.
Name some more
for personal reasons.
These are the worlds that we live,
die for,
down the streets,
across the seas,
in the Middle East,
up the alley
on a foggy Saturday night,
riding the bus to pre-school and getting off at high school
just in time for the shooting,
for the simple fact of being picked on.
And out along the river of a late
Friday evening,
we can still hear
the blistering sound
of the gun
firing out
some harsh thoughts,
which continues on
during the late evening news.

In the filthy streets,
People march through remorse,
apologies here and there
for the sake
and comfort of saying,
I'm sorry to it all.
And thinking it will be
forgotten in time
to send the kids
outside to go on
and play.

The Green Crayon's Deconstruction

Jamie Kazay

One can write overwhelmed words with a green crayon,

describing bleeding skies upon the horizon.

In sectioned font deep-cemented, each thought holed.

Then a girl can run with the green crayon,

writing each line as an ant, scurrying to build, the unobtainable.

She sways through compulsive habits, the fashion of now,

as car horns toil and cheesecake melts on this January day.

Each decoded breath, crashing stillness.

And even when she wakes to blank dawn,

she'll sway through the kamikazes of World War II.

They sway even though she doesn't see them.

She'll keep swaying-1939 needs her.

Six years later, 1945 will need her too.

All among the fickle splendor Cordell Hull will sway,

for he is the year's Peace Laureate.

So girl with the green crayon continue swaying

through sky, not bright, green with storms.

Untitled

Jenny Kane

The music said write. And so I could not hold back the calling to let my thoughts flow with the rhythms of the voices which cradled my desires like that of a child in search of some familiar caress, sending off to slumber in a slow steady pulse, beating to the tapping pitter patter of my heart.

My eyes cannot see the way from my hands,

The way my fingers find ways with making thoughts feel

Alive in the very tips that soothe lips across tenders drops.

An eye catches glimpses, but is unable to speak

The way my hands work primeval methods of collaboration

Bringing time together, clashing instinct with decorum, insisting on writing words,

Words my eyes do not comprehend

But my mind searches for lost understanding of the ideas

Which flow from swirling spasms of motion fought no more.

The music defeats my games and excuses, putting to shame in silence;

I walk a myriad of labyrinths, drenched chaotic in the sweat over mere pragmatics.

Objectivity is reserved for fools.

Touch this -

Through tips of fingers vibrating life with the very written language of movement and the caress of a word. I don't know where the pounding springs from, up from within the depths I never knew I could feel. I beat now with unknown rhythm. I thought I lacked the feeling. And now I coordinate the ebb coming and going up and down. Steady pulse. A global motion to defeat appearance, to extend beyond the earthly tools of human hands.

Witnessing the unexplainable urge to move your entire being in rhythm to: Whatever comes.

Lose the you in the moment of pure existence alongside and in witness of something so pure as sound, piecing together the chaos, the life once lacking any sense of the five stated.

I thought I knew, I cried.

Purpose reveals itself in pieces, shattered photographs reflecting light and contrasting the reality you once clung to. I bitterly gripped the railing, bit through metallic bars and caged my own beauty.

Now sing the winter's solemn seconds of change, slowly now to spring.

Life anew, not bent and broken in remorse of self-conceit and pity,

But open and accepting, wide-eyed, arms spread,

Embracing the influx, the natural progression and inter twined steps,

Beating in rhythm, in rhythm now I write I see I feel in my hands which see:

The way now forward in tonight.

Self-Portrait

Jamie Kazay

This Yoruba Woman, with cunning silhouette salutes the maze of reluctance and expectance.
I know murder. Migrating again.
Stopping at the brink of blood's separation.
Amid pointing billows lie answers to a soul's circuitry.
You must clap twice and look east for this peace.
My palms are scuffed from their constant meeting, making the sound of hunted zebras-thhhuump, thhhuump.
I can recall the battle, army, cause, although I still yearn for a forgotten Nigeria.
Remote, with its own eyes spying silence, dusted in thickets and crowns.
Wars twist and hiss through dawns of deep rain.
Flame kisses this land among the Bright of Benin.
Then there is a voice, my origin.
The self, not black, is swollen against ocean.

Archives
MSMC

Unconditional Love

Jessica Flores

Nine long months of waiting.
Thirty excruciating hours of labor.
One tiny, little life.

Ten tiny fingers with ten tiny nails.
Ten tiny toes, plump and pink.
Two sleepy eyes too tired to see.
Two tiny ears ready to hear.
One button nose waiting for an Eskimo kiss.

Two incredibly strong lungs.
One extraordinary cry.
One strong, beating heart.
One tiny wee-wee with good aim.
One perfect, healthy baby boy.
Endless love born in a second.

Two parents, one child.
One unconditional love.

You Don't Know Me!!!

Raven Wilson

Assumption- a hypothesis taken for granted, or an audacious (arrogant) behavior that one has no right to.

I must be a fugitive from America's Most Wanted because I cannot help but notice the nervous effect that I have on Caucasians. Imagine sitting in a philosophy class and during the lecture, you feel the urge to help improve the environment by throwing your trash away. As you rise from your pre-school like desk to discard your trash, you view your blonde-haired, blue-eyed teacher give a ghastly facial expression. Not because your not loitering or "disrupting" the class, but out of fear. The teacher finds you intimidating, not because you have mastered so much in philosophy that you could teach the class, but by being 5'11 and Black causes her to worry that you are attempting to attack them, not help improve the environment.

How would that make you feel? Not like an everlasting ray of sunshine, I'll tell you that! Being stereotyped and treated or looked at differently because of assumptions occur all too often in this great country that we call America.

Last time I checked, I do not recall that every Black girl's name is contrived from such vivid imagination that we don't feel the need to use conventional American names. Don't get me wrong, everyone has the right to name their children whatever they want, this is America right? However, for the love of Jesus, Mary, AND, Joseph, please do not assume that just because I'm black does not mean that my name cannot possibly be Susan, Rebecca, Veronica, etc.; instead of Tomika, Shaneneh, or Bonquesha!

Why is it that speaking proper English is such a morbid shock to the nervous system? Asking someone for directions by using typical mannerisms such as: Please, Excuse Me, Thank You, should not determine how "black" I am. Using correct diction should not be used as grounds for exclusion either by the African-American community, or to elicit surprise from people of the Caucasian persuasion.

My numerous experiences with stereotypes brings me to a conclusion that it does not matter if I become a millionaire, or live in the projects, it does not matter if I was a high school dropout, or graduated from Harvard magna cum laude. Fame, fortune, notoriety, education does not make hurtful assumptions fade away. I have to accept the fact that I can never become just a filmmaker. That is not the first description that people see. I will never be thought of as just a woman or a student, the adjective black will always precede.

Mocking Russian

Vanessa Bravo

Tolstoy laughs at me. He dissects my brain,

Finding the nerve to induce the pain. Dead,

Ivan lies cold, with hands overlapping.

"To kiss her hands," she whispered more as

A question than response. Healer of wounds,

Preparer of meals, and holder of books

And children's hands, that which her lips touched in

Love. "They're cold," she said as the sea flowed, as

If in final confirmation: She is

Gone. Tears of life upon hands of the dead.

Now I know why Ivan warns the living.

Molinetes

Denise Resendez

Lleno mis días con recuerdos de ti

Los saco uno por uno del cofre...

La primera vez que acariciaste mi piel,

La cita en la playa, el primer beso...

Los pongo en orden cronológica, pues

Tú sabes como soy de ordenada y particular.

Me dejo encantar recorriendo momentos felices,

Pero siempre llego al último "te quiero."

Me apena tener que llegar al final.

Regreso al principio y doy algunas vueltas.

La vida cotidiana interrumpe el tiovivo.

Te guardo apresuradamente y sé que el carrusel

Continuará más tarde y volveré a ser feliz aunque

Sólo sea con cofres inventados y giros en el pasado.

Breaking Through "The Wall"

Marisa Smith

There was a time when school wasn't all about books, due dates and bitter teachers. This time was known to me as Junior High. The classroom was a place for learning, not rote and standardized academics. There was never a time before, or after when compulsory education filled me with such admiration and appetite for learning. Because of one caring teacher, this child was not left behind. And so, I made the trek across campus every day to seek out Mr. Irwin.

To put it lightly, Mr. Irwin was one of the great philosophers of the late 20th century. (At least, this is what I believed to be true). I would invade his classroom at lunch and after school. We would sit there, sometimes until the sun disappeared behind the ocean, talking about politics, music, religion, and life.
Needless to say, I felt isolated and adrift in Junior High. It was in the magical net of revolutionaries, new wave music, and Clint Eastwood that Mr. Irwin caught me.

When other teachers taught their students rules, Mr. Irwin was telling me about Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and Che Guevarra. To this day, I attribute some of my revolutionary spirit to his guidance, but by the same token, the rebel within me was dormant, waiting for the day when it could speak freely and tackle the administration. It wasn't what he taught me; it was how he opened my eyes to so many other things, better than the ones that were simply given to me, or right before me.

Other teachers helped in opening my eyes to the world, during junior high: Rand, Devon, Michelle; and it was the way they took me into their social circle without

hesitation, that makes me grateful-because they realized I was quite alone in the world at that time.

Even after graduating from junior high, I would walk from the high school on Friday afternoons back to my haven; all to relive the allure that delivered me from my ennui, but it was fading. As my move from junior high to high school put physical distance between Mr. Irwin and me, it also increased the emotional distance. The saying goes: "all good things must come to an end." As such, I was growing up. It was inevitable that I would move on to high school, but something I never imagined as sure as the passage of time was not being able to talk about revolutions, philosophers and Depeche Mode with Mr. Irwin. It was now my time, where I was allowed to mature and become an individual. It was not a matter of wanting to, I just couldn't prevent or stop it. As I grew up, I saw less and less of Mr. Irwin.

I finally realized I stood in his shadow, and, like a sponge, absorbed everything he had to say; but now, I am my own person. I will never forget his kindness, when I pay tribute to him every day, by studying political science, philosophy and opening my eyes to the world around me.

When I hear Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall" I do not think of the oppression many students suffer while in compulsory education, I think of how Mr. Irwin taught me to break through my own wall, a skill which I will use for years to come, and more useful than any rote fact I was taught throughout high school and before.

Rain

Jenni Hernandez

Rain.

Falling gently 'gainst my window -

Grace in the form of staccato;

Like a voice to slow my tears

And drown my fears.

Descending tenderness

'Gainst my skin,

Icy-cool and thin,

Washing o'er the pain -

Here to keep me sane.

Us

Rebecca Mariá Romero

I'm with you in Rockland
Or perhaps I wanted to be

The day and that night melted into
Tear stained pillows in East LA

The howl of the freeway roared
Disintegrating coherent thought

And she was broken
Everything was lost

The days, the weeks, the years
Forgetting for minutes at a time

Another desert girl left in a roadside ditch
In a quiet town an hour outside of East LA.

I cried, the town cried, the world cried for us
As newspapers blame the illegal laborers.

"It was the Immigrants who did this to us!
Let their children starve in the Land of Plenty!"

Let them die, let them die, let them die
If all the sticky hate in the world would

Put this Humpty Dumpty back together again
Stand up! Tell us exactly what happened ...

Stand up! In front of your mother and tell her
About the blood and the tears and the duct tape.

Stand up! Look your father in the eye and tell him
He could not protect his little girl from East LA.

I cried, the town cried, the world cried for us
They tell us they're sorry, so sorry, sorry, sorry

Let the whole world hear her cry
Let the whole world hear us all cry

Momma Your Depression Looms Up High

Marielos Zeka

Momma your depression looms up, high
The many times you wished to die
And said you hated me, weigh heavily
On former tidy shoulders chipped away with sorrow

Momma your abandonment stands
In the peripheral vision of my mind's eye
Left to depend on breasts that were foreign
That feeling of rejection never left my side

Momma you've kept lofty feelings inside
Never answering just steering my questions aside
Holding hands with you I have come to realize
That the distance between us keeps me below myself

Momma I've been more like you everyday
Locked up and bending more as I age
You have fashioned me from your mold
And now your depression looms up close,
As I float

Some Things I Know

Ashlei Kramer

A friend of mine once asked me what it's like to be a lesbian. What my friend was really asking for was some secret he thinks I know the answer to, since I have the dual benefit in being a female who is, in turn, trying to seduce other females. I didn't know how to answer him, and even if I did, it would surely take longer than two pages to explain.

By definition, a lesbian is a woman that is sexually and romantically attracted to another woman. I am a lover of women, so I guess that makes me a lesbian. These whimsical creatures will forever fascinate me. I love everything about them: their softness, smoother than any silk that has ever existed; their luscious curves that make up the shape of the female form, as well as the various colors and tints of their skin; all of which have inspired artists for centuries.

If I were to pass along any secret concerning the nature of women, I certainly could not divulge how to make a woman fall in love, anymore than I could reveal the secret to immortality. Instead, I will attempt to illuminate the truth in how the concept of "loving a woman" exists more as a state of being most have found impossible to understand, let alone reach.

To possess a woman's heart, you have to captivate her imagination and then astound her by humbly asking permission to worship her. Be gentle with your intentions, and start simply, by caressing her with your eyes. Brush her skin with the very tips of your fingers, ever so slightly, and send her into a feverish shiver. Sometimes just letting your lips graze her temple can make you feel

reborn, and other times you won't be satisfied even after hours of devouring her lips. The way you feel inside as your hands touch the body of a woman can be more addicting than heroin, and the high can only be matched by the taste of a woman. How sweet the flavor of honey is on one's lips. Every woman tastes differently and yet every woman tastes the same.

A woman will let you in the way a man never can. Just by resting your head in her lap, you can dream as serenely as a child. To love a woman so thoroughly and so completely, you have to accept everything about her. When the time comes that you live to see her smile and would gladly die to hear the symphony of her laugh, you are getting closer to the ultimate truth. Your arms must always be there to offer shelter and your chest must be a ready sanctuary for any tears to fall on.

Look at a woman and truly see her for the imperfect being she is. Bask in those imperfections; they are what make your lady unique and a treasure. If you intend to keep a woman forever, you must forever be all things for her: court jester, knight in shining armor, fellow gossip, mother to guide her and dry her tears, father to protect her from the world's evils, lover to fan the flames of her buried passion. Finally, you must also be her personal saint that loves her so perfectly and unconditionally for all her gifts and faults that there is no way she can miss seeing the light of God in your eyes the next time she catches you staring. You must be all these things in order to truly love a woman. Anything more is not possible and anything less... is simply not good enough.

Fucking Piece of Cotton

Marielos Zeka

Waking up last night in a hectic frenzy, a feeling of doom took over me. But yet, despite my searching I found no signs of a devastating earthquake, no fire alarm evacuating us from harm's way. In fact, my two roommates were still sound asleep dreaming of gumdrops and flying seahorses. As for me, well, I was lying in my bed staring at the ceiling perplexed by my emotional limbo. Finally the answer came as if the bells in hell had chimed. I knew I had started my life cycle; It was a "phenomenon." It was my period and despite its miraculous arrival, I did not feel like singing its praises. In fact, all I had was a couple four-letter words for it.

Lying there, I was so comfortable; I wanted to roll over and go to back to sleep but I knew what I had to do. I sat up; my eyes widened. In that moment, I hated being a woman; I wanted more than anything to trade in my equipment and declare gender bankruptcy. Slowly, like a lethargic bear emerging from its long hibernation, I rose from my bed and made my way to my desk. There inside my middle drawer, I found my answer, the one thing that could make this horrifying moment a little more bearable. I rummaged through my term papers and my Mr. Potato Head collection and finally came upon it, a pad, a fucking piece of cotton.

There in its pink wrapper, folded neatly in thirds, I found my savior. No more worries of bleeding through my sheets or waking up with crimson stains on my SpongeBob SquarePants pajamas. No, this time it wouldn't happen to me 'cause this time nature called and I answered the door. Hello, nature, meet my Kotex raincoat.

I grabbed my feminine product and stuffed it in my pocket. Walking down the hall towards the bathroom, I felt like a secret agent watching my back from Russian Spies. I walked quickly into the bathroom and ran into the first stall I could. Then I took the pad out of its handy wrapper. I spent a moment examining the quality of the pad I was about to use. The salmon pink plastic cupping the soft blanket of alabaster cotton held together by a thin mesh comforter was held in my hands like a sagging load.

When I was at the store last time I thought about buying the kind with wings but these were super absorbent not to mention they were also on sale. But now I was beginning to regret my decision. I mean what if I miss the center and bleed on the sides. What if tomorrow I meet Mr. Right and while I am walking away all he can see is some big ass splotch on my pants. Damn, I should have bought the Maxis with wings. These inferior pads never worked out. What was I thinking!? Then again if I really wanted to avoid spills, I should have bought tampons. But then I thought about shoving a piece of fucking cotton up my vagina. The idea just creeps me out. Plus my mom always told me that virgins shouldn't use tampons. What would she think if she found out I was using tampons? The truth would then be out. Aye, Dios mio! I don't even want to think about it. She would send me to confession or something claiming I was a chola, nothing but a dirty slut. But then looking at this pad, I wondered why it was called a sanitary napkin. What's so sanitary about sitting in a pool of your own endometrium all day? And it feels like a diaper; I feel like sucking a bottle of milk and eating my own mocos when I wear them. Then again, what if I decided to be a rough Amazon warrior-princess and not wear anything to contain my blood. It would be liberating; I would be a radical. Ok, a radical with no friends

but a radical nonetheless. What's so wrong with nature anyway!? This is the way it's meant to be. Once I thought about not shaving my legs ever again but then prom rolled around and those shitty pantyhose didn't look right with my fuzzy gorilla legs. I guess blood dripping down them wouldn't look much better. Fuck it! At least I don't have to shove this fucking piece of cotton inside myself!

I put the pad on and made sure it was securely in place. In that moment I felt awkward, not because I had basically taped cotton near my crotch, but because I didn't know whether to rejoice the news that once again I had evaded pregnancy or mourn the loss of another chance for me to know the joys of giving life. Soon, that thought passed and I just felt awkward because of the whole damn cotton thing. God Damn, fucking stupid piece of cotton! I walked a little bow legged to my room, opened the door and prayed to God that I wouldn't wake up in the morning with my ass lying in a soaked red mattress. Why not tell the whole world? Hey everyone, I'm on my period!

The Comeback

Zoran Masirevic

It was a message, from far above,
With touch of blessing, and sign of love.
Heavenly letter, delivered straight,
Sealed with compassion, stamped by the fate.
Although, it had expired date,
From whom it came, it can't be late.
After a decade of painful sleep,
I was awakened, my breath was deep.
I felt the heat, of the old flame,
My heart was screaming- back to the game!
How come now, why not before?
God knows the answer, don't ask for more.
My muse is smiling, that's all I know,
She's all dressed up, covered in glow.
This time around, for the right reason,
No more excuses, and no more treason.
Armed with the beauty, grace, and orison,
She looks quite ready, to shine this season.
Stronger than fear, sharper than shame,
Without guilt, and without blame.
Neither for money, nor for the fame,
Simply, just for the love of the game.

The Comfort of a Dream

Ileana Hernandez

For a long time, I went to bed early knowing that he would be waiting for me on the other side. His voice would calm me and I could feel protected like I did when I was eight. It has been five years now, and I could still feel him in my dreams as if he was really with me. I sometimes wake up thinking that if I walk into his room, he will be there, sitting in his lazy-boy, feet up, a cup of coffee in one hand and the sports section, in the other. "Ven aquí, Mija," he would say, and of course I would run to sit on his lap and lean my head on his chest. I could feel the cold button of his shirt touching my cheek, while I stared at words I couldn't understand.

When I wake up from my dreams, I realize I will never be able to feel that sense of protection I always felt when I was with my father as a child. My cheeks become moist as the tears start running down my face, and all I want to do is return to my dreams; dreams that are my way of escaping the clutching grip of reality.

At the time I found out my father had cancer, I was too young to really believe anything like that could happen to my family. Everything was so perfect and there wasn't anything to worry about. My father was always a strong man, who always worried about us before worrying about himself. I'll never forget when my parents walked into the room and made everyone sit down because they had something to tell us. Did my father get a new job? Or perhaps they have finally decided to buy the house they have been interested in? At least that's what I hoped their announcement was related to. The thought of cancer never crossed my mind, nor was there ever a reason for it to. I vaguely remember my

father mentioning a pain in his stomach, but it was always just that, a simple pain. When my father told us he had cancer, it felt like the end of the world, not just for me but for everyone. He was alive for only a short time after, but until this day I use my dreams as a way to have him by my side.

During the day I can sometimes feel his presence, but the feeling is very different. I can feel he's watching over me and guiding me throughout my daily activities. I often think to myself, "If I do this or that, will he get disappointed or be pleased?" But in my dreams, I go back to my comfort zone where I can feel him by my side. Not just watching over me, but reassuring me that everything will be all right.

"Each Day" 2 a.m.

Amparo Hernandez

You live each day as if you are in a nightmare.
Inescapable; you are trapped, unaware,
Hoping to someday wake up.
Although the one thing you look forward to
Each day, is to fall on your bed
Like something dead, dropped to be forgotten,
Hoping to regain some peace in your mind, rotten,
While sleeping, until you eventually wake up to face
The new horrors of the next day.
But until then, you sit still, thinking
Of something real, holding on to the sinking belief
That your troubles will vanish
Like sand flying with the wind.
The inevitability of failure,
Forever programmed in your head.
Confidence is now foreign.
Do you know what this feels like?
When staring into a dream, the music screams.
Then you're falling in your coffin
While showered with dirt
Until all is forgotten. Now quiet,
A new hell is started.
But until then, just hold on.

Why

Kristin Maneca

I write because this burning in my soul;
this unrest.
This drive for something better;
some happiness.
I write because of nothing
and everything.
Things I can't say aloud,
but can't sleep on them.
It crawls under my skin;
through my flesh.
This desire to know,
to feel.
I write because of everything I can't be;
everything I want to be.
All my insecurities,
all my dark thoughts inside.
It takes me into a world
where otherwise I am not welcome.
I write because of me,
and how sometimes I wish I wasn't.
It frees me momentarily,
lets me be more than I am.
Each word across a page
flows like blood from my veins.
I write because for a moment,
I transcend this body and...I am.

Tonight

Amparo Hernandez

Tonight I saw fairies dancing on stars.

They were frolicking amidst the warm

Summer night. And as they sprang high

To the light of the moon, I saw magic

And wonder, fast at play. What a dreamy sight!

Moist glitter drops sprinkled off the moon tonight

As they fell and landed on my pillow, while I slept

And dreamed of a land where fears are never kept.

In her mind, Carrie held conversations with famous people. In these daydreams, she was witty, shy, intelligent, brave, whatever she wanted to be. She found romance, solved world hunger, or starred in a feature film, always accepting her newfound notoriety-for she always started each daydream as plain old Carrie, mousy brown-haired, selling fabric to hotel chains-with style and grace, as if her being discovered was nothing less than a cosmic eventuality.

She had certain celebrity favorites, mostly actors and pop stars, but occasionally a novelist or politician, who would pop up more often than others. They fit well within her notions of romantic leads, just as her glamorous alter ego was perfect to play opposite them. She relived fictitious conversations with her favorites over and over, picking them up where she left off after being interrupted for work or sleep. Or she would start anew, "introducing" herself to her fantasy men, usually during some critical or accidental incident, and then enjoying all over again the thrill of discovery, the delirium of a first kiss, the overwhelming joy of fresh passion.

She was never doing something so mundane as organizing fabric swatches when she met her heroes. She was caught completely unawares when she looked up from her sample book to see Rob Faulkner, lead singer of Asphodel, sitting there at the hotel bar some five yards away, sipping on a diet soda. He was holding a newspaper folded into quarters, drumming one hand on the heavily lacquered bar, and looking intently at some children skating in the hotel ice rink. The rink was small by ice skating standards, but large enough to be inconvenient as a centerpiece to the hotel lobby. It was surrounded by a ridiculous miniature Victorian English

village with chipped paint and black smudges near the bottom where skaters ran into it. He watched amused as a child took a spill and crawled back up again.

Carrie blinked, looked away, and looked back again, just to make sure she wasn't letting her imagination get the best of her. She scanned the area for security detail or personal handlers, any sign that this was indeed a famous person-and one of her favorites-in front of her. Realizing she was staring, she lifted the book of swatches in front of her, pretending to study how the wallpapers worked with the fabric, peeking at him sideways through her hair.

He was a little shorter than she expected. He was wearing a loose shirt that hid what she thought to be a muscular physique, but she couldn't be sure. His hair was darker than she thought it would be, a more natural brown, obviously his own color. It was the same medium brown as her own hair, a color she knew no one ever paid money to achieve artificially. There were no blond streaks, no spikes, no hair gel, just an average haircut that lay flat on his head, with the slightest wave behind his ears, a pair of curls that framed a pair of perfect earlobes. His face was all angles, a straight nose, a square jaw, a slight indentation of the cheeks that reminded her of boxy cartoon drawings of men with enormous shoulders and a heavy black line for both eyes and eyebrows-he was comic book masculinity, only more believable. Looking at his face from such a close distance, she could see that he was still strikingly handsome, but that his real face differed dramatically from his public face, which was more rounded, generically attractive and obviously the work of hair and makeup artists. She tried to remember his likeness in magazines, his interviews on television, but those images seemed flat now, artificial, and not nearly as interesting as the man before her. She smiled to herself at the realization

that, from now on, she would be able to look at this or that picture and say that in real life he looked thinner, younger, older, that this color matched the blue of his eyes. And she would know, because she had seen him in the flesh. In this hotel bar that was about to be made over in "Art Deco Beach."

In her one of her daydreams, she might have gone up to him and said something to make him laugh. They would get to talking, and he would immediately fall in love with her, and before long she would be going on tour with him, sharing a tiny bunk in a trailer and waiting for him backstage at each show. In reality, she wanted nothing more than to watch him quietly until he left, then head up to her room to think of his image until dinner time. She might as well have to summon the courage to dance the cha-cha as hold a real-life conversation with him. As she felt her face start to flush, she decided that the only thing to do was escape unnoticed. She leaned down and gathered her sample books, preparing to leave.

"Do you skate?"

Carrie turned to see him standing beside her left elbow. His voice was smooth, with a Nordic accent that made her think of crisp linen sheets. It was lower than his singing voice. She felt her mouth go dry. "Huh?"

He smiled. "I understand if you don't want to, I just thought it might be fun." He pointed at the rink. Some of the children had left, and there were only about a dozen people steadily circling. A lone figure skater practiced turns in the middle. "Sure," she said, her throat tightening around the word. She put down her books and stuck her quivering hands into her pockets as she walked over to the ticket booth. She fumbled in her purse for some money. "I've got it," he said, handing the cashier a large bill. She mumbled her thanks. The cashier, a twenty-something clearly bored at making a

living at a teenager-after-school job, stared at Rob, grasping at near recognition. Carrie gave an almost imperceptible nod in affirmation of the cashier's suspicions, warning him not to say anything. She hoped Rob didn't notice. The cashier looked again at Rob and back at Carrie, raising his eyebrows.

He didn't appear to get the hint. In an effort to keep the process moving, she blurted out her shoe size. Nine, please! Then, thinking how embarrassing to have such big feet, she said no, eight. But then she realized she would never get her feet in an eight.

Rob chuckled at her indecision. "Do they run true to size?" he asked. They did.

"Then, how about an eight-and-a-half for my friend here?"

Carrie forced a laugh that was more lighthearted than she felt and took her skates to the nearest bench to put them on.

It took her a few minutes to get used to the feel of the ice beneath her feet. She hadn't skated in years, but she was pleased at how naturally it came back to her. She had a lithe, graceful body, and a natural sense of rhythm. In fact, skating was just one of many things that Carrie could do tolerably well without being good enough to merit attention. A decent dancer but only with a good lead. Could carry a tune but not a solo. Could copy a design freehand but had no original ideas. That was Carrie. Good old capable Carrie. She'll come through for you in a pinch, but she's not the star of your show.

Carrie was surprised to see that Rob's ankles wobbled slightly as he meandered tentatively around the rink. Why did she think he would be a terrific skater? Just because he was Norwegian? Because he was famous? It was silly, she thought, to make assumptions about a person based on sketchy biographical information she

had read in the papers. She reminded herself that he was in fact a real person, not just an 8x10 glossy, and not just a voice on a CD. Carrie whirled herself around with a flip of her hip, and the she was facing him, skating backwards. She grabbed hold of his hands and pulled him along. He blinked at the sudden movement, then grinned sheepishly.

"Cheesy couples skate song," she joked, pointing upwards with her eyes at the speakers in the center of the ceiling. "This is the part where you ask me out to the Spring Dance."

He laughed. "You've done this a long time."

"What, picking up men?"

"No, skating."

"Oh. No, not a long time. It was just something to do growing up in Sheboygan." She guided him gently around the corner, making it so that he didn't have to pick up his feet. "It was a long time ago."

"I never did skate much," he said, straightening up shakily as he came out of the turn. "Asthma. All the other kids were out playing hockey, and I was inside toying with the piano. By the time the asthma cleared up, I'd gotten the Fear."

Carrie looked puzzled. "The Fear? Of what?"

"Of falling," he grimaced. "You've got to be fearless. You can learn anything if you're fearless."

"Like those young girl gymnasts," she suggested.

"And skateboarders."

"And rock stars," she said and nodded to him.

"Well, maybe," he said, nodding back his acknowledgement that she had correctly identified his occupation. "Some fears you're born with."

Carrie thought for a moment about what it might be like to perform in front of thousands of screaming fans. Here was her chance to ask, was he afraid of that?

What was it like, really? But Carrie didn't want to sound like a fan. He probably got tired of answering fan questions. Instead, she said, "So here's what we should do. We'll get you a walker, like my grandmother has, and you can lean on that until you're ready. Training wheels, for your feet. You'd be doing double axles in no time."

"Nah, it wouldn't help, I think," he said, clumsily maneuvering another corner, "It's like singing. Whether you do it in front of two or two hundred thousand, if you're afraid of performing, you're going to have sweaty palms until it's over."

Carrie would have preferred performing for a thousand anonymous strangers to one Rob Faulkner. "Well then, I guess you just have to keep holding on." She picked up the pace slightly as they crossed the straightaway and headed into a curve. They made a few more rotations around the rink, each one a little smoother and faster than the one before, and with each one Rob held on a little tighter. Then the cashier blew a whistle and motioned for everyone to leave the ice while it was resurfaced. Rob and Carrie turned in their skates.

Carrie was ready for a friendly handshake, maybe even a thanks-for-helping-me-pass-the-time hug, and then a quick dismissal. Before she knew it, she was agreeing to London broil. In his room. He would like some company, he explained, but he had made too much of a spectacle of himself. He needed to get out of sight before some photographer found him, or a group of screaming girls tore at his clothes. Carried eyed the cashier, who was talking animatedly to someone on the phone. She was right not to trust him, she thought. And Rob was more observant than she had noticed. None of her daydreams had ever prepared her for the necessary cautions of celebrity. As they waited for the elevator, she shifted her weight from foot to foot, excited, but wanting to run.

Her heart began to pound faster as the elevator

climbed up to the penthouse floor. Having sold to other hotels in the chain, she knew there wasn't actually a button on the elevator for his floor. You had to get off at the top floor, walk into a side hallway and use the room key to call a private elevator. Going to the penthouse as a guest and not an employee, however, made her nervous. She peered around every corner, expecting the hotel manager to jump out and tell her to get back to work.

As they stepped out of the elevator, Carrie recognized that they were in the smallest of the three penthouses. The other two were nearly the size of her own one-story, two-bedroom house. But this one was more like an apartment, decidedly smaller, for the second rate celebrities. She wondered who was currently in the other two penthouses.

The living room was techno-purple, intended to approximate "Modern Elegant Royal," but missing the mark by a few shades. The furniture was futuristic, attempting chic and finding George Jetson instead. Carrie wondered what firm had done the job, and whether she might know the designer. She wouldn't know what to say if she did. She wasn't very good at false compliments, and her job was just to find a shade that matched. Something to blend in. She was good at blending in.

"I know," said Rob, laughing at her expression of distaste, "it's someone's idea of what rich people like. Personally, I'd rather have one of the regular rooms. I hear they're 'Neo-Victorian.'"

"Yeah," she laughed, "but not for long. Art Deco Beach as of next week."

"Damn pity. Do you think they'd sell me a lamp or two before they throw them out?"

Carrie volunteered to scrounge one for him. "No one will believe me, though, if I say I'm rummaging through

discarded hotel furniture for Rob Faulkner."

"Hmmm. You're right. Better come up with a cover story. Tell people you're dumpster diving for Mick Jagger. That would probably do it. TV?" He pointed at a big screen on the wall and a box that served as TV/TIVO/CD/DVD/VHS and every other acronym machine. A card on top of the box advertised that it was voice operated, with a hard drive full of classic films and new blockbusters. "If you can work this contraption, I'll BUY you the TV." Carrie said she would help, but made no promises.

The meal arrived on a motorized cart that apparently knew how to take itself up in the elevators and ring the bell. Rob left it a tip for the chef, and it went whirring away, like an excited paperboy getting a bonus at Christmas.

Dinner was London broil, as he promised, but the side dishes were unidentifiable vegetables in odd sauces. The food was arranged in carefully balanced, sculpted wedges around the plate, with a sliced carrot fountain blooming in the center. The presentation reminded her of anal-retentive French gardens, so well manicured and so ornate that you dared not lean over to smell the roses. She didn't know how to eat this meal. She was glad to see that Rob dug right in, oblivious to the artistry in front of him. He probably ate this sort of meal three times a day, she thought. It was no reason to go hungry.

He noted her hesitancy, and said, "Go ahead, help yourself." She picked up her fork, lifted a small piece of mushroom to her lips. Rob crunched on watercress.

"Not exactly burgers and fries," she said.

"Haven't had them in ages," he said. He speared a broccoli and swabbed it around in a raspberry sauce. "I really miss them. It's not that the hotels don't carry them-my personal trainer won't let me have them." He

paused, put the broccoli in his mouth, chewed and swallowed. "I haven't once been able to hide it from him."

"Hide what?"

"A burger and fries. He can always tell when I've had one, even over the phone."

"It's like sex, I guess," Carrie said.

Rob looked stumped. Carrie blushed, suddenly regretting her outburst and wanting to take it back.

"What I mean is," she continued, folding a green bean awkwardly into her mouth, "you can't hide when you've had sex." She blushed more deeply. "At least, I've never gotten away with it."

"Right," said Rob. "It shows somehow."

They both stared at their plates silently. Rob went back to crunching watercress. Carrie felt a small trickle of sweat run down the back of her neck.

"Do you mind if I take off my shoes?" he asked.

"Go ahead," she said.

He took off his shoes and laid them aside. He balled his socks together and put them in one of the shoes. His feet were baby pink, the color of new skin that has yet to be scuffed and sullied by the earth beneath them. His second toe was longer than the big toe, a quirky quality that offset the professionalism of a tidy pedicure. The sight of Rob Faulkner's naked feet made Carrie feel as if a dirty secret had somehow passed between them. She coughed. He leaned over slightly towards her, and her heart skipped a beat. She studied his face, his smooth, chiseled cheeks, his blue eyes. She leaned in, too, hesitant. She could smell his aftershave, a musky sweetness warmed by his pulse points and mixed with sweat. He turned his head to face the television and said, "TV on." The television turned on. He leaned back again. "I can get it to do that much, anyway," he said.

Carrie relaxed. "Huh," she said, suddenly wanting something to do with her hands, which were lying stu

pidly in her lap. She began to twirl a strand of hair in her fingers. What was she doing here? In all her fantasies, what gave her the greatest thrill was the first moment of sexual contact, the culmination of anxious foreplay. But here she was, inches away from a very handsome, very famous rock star, and she was scared that he might actually get close enough to touch her. She watched him fumble with the TV remote and reminded herself that he was a real person, nothing to be scared of. A real person, a real person...

There was a knock at the door. Rob got up to answer it, but before he got there, a man opened it and came inside. Carrie stopped twirling her hair. The man carried a clipboard and wore a tie and round glasses, making him look like a cross between John Lennon and a pen salesman. "Okay, Gunther, you've got a sound check tomorrow at noon. You've got an interview at ten at a local radio station, but there will be a car to take you..." The man stopped when he saw Carrie sitting on the couch, looking dumbly at the carpet about four feet in front of where he was standing. She was still pondering the fact that he called Rob "Gunther" when she realized the man was pointing at her. "What's this?" he asked. "What the hell are you doing? Did anyone see you? Gunther, you know you can't just. . ."

"It's okay, Simon, she's just having dinner with me. She's helping me figure out the TV."

"You can't just invite any old floozy up to your room! Do you have any idea what trouble this could cause?"

Rob put his hands matter-of-factly to his hips. "She's no floozy. She works here at the hotel. . ."

"Reports are already out that you're here, you know. And there was that hoopla last week about you splitting with your wife."

"Klara and I are not splitting up. We put out a release about that."

"Doesn't matter. People see you with her, they'll keep talking. It's bad press."

Carrie stood up and got a head rush. Her ears burned. "Maybe I should go."

Rob turned to her and took two steps in her direction. "No, really, you don't have to."

The pen salesman cleared his throat. "Yes, really, you do." He prepared to escort her off the premises. Carrie picked up her purse.

Rob looked at his feet. "I'm sorry," he said. "Maybe he's right. I didn't mean to cause trouble."

Carrie forgot the awkward shame surrounding herself and was suddenly angry that this ornery little man, whom she deduced to be Rob's agent, could turn her favorite singer, a talented, powerful and world-renowned pop icon, into a child scolded.

"I could still get you that lamp," she suggested, offering him her business card.

"Yeah," he answered. "That'd be great. But say it's for Mick Jagger, remember." He put his hand to his mouth as if he were whispering in her ear.

"Right," she said. She walked over to the door, past the leering Simon.

"Or maybe," said Rob, "just send it here." He grabbed a cocktail napkin from the bar and scrawled an address. Carrie read it-Gunther Nollenberger, an address in Norway-and put it in her pocket.

"No problem," she said. "Compliments of the staff at Twilight Fabrics, Incorporated."

"Perfect," he said, laughing. "A corporate gift. Get them all the time. Thanks for the company tonight."

"No, thank you," she said. "It was really great, really..." She didn't know what else to say. She could not confess to him how many times she had conjured up his public image for a private fantasy. She would not tell him that. But she wanted to say something more, something pro

found or clever, something he could remember her by. She wanted to leave him with some famous last words. But Simon was tugging at her elbow, and soon she was back in the private elevator. Simon pressed the down button and watched as the doors closed behind her.

My Boyfriend's Guns

Jamie Kazay

In all this time, under the dresser,

there were two rifles and two revolvers

collecting, some dust,

some lint, often the damp darkness, heavy

and blowing through the open slit, so small, seemingly

wet.

But it is as dry as the Iraqi dessert during a sandstorm.

And they rest, the triggers unoiled, the bullets

unfleshed.

These iron masses uncombatted.

Although there are soldiers in lobotomized uniforms,

believing in America and victory, the enemy and disar

moment,

despised tanks, style-satellites, standard, ruling and sor

row.

Still there are those plush entries,

night bombing, star flyers,

citizens wishing for untouched sleep.

Into such velveteen corpses, such hearts,

each empty midnight-metal shell saying: die, die, die,

please-die, please-die.

Each strike like a scald-scads, flushed, praying.

The Perfect Season

Loren Ornelas

As a mystical doom
lies before us
We seek shelter beneath
the fallen sky
Share a kiss as defeated stars blanket us
in a magnificent darkness
We run past memories and shattered dreams
Stopping only to listen to
melodious praises
Along the way we pass
the weeping moon
Radiant
in her somber glory
We raise her high
over all the land
And digress as beams
of gold stream through
It gives hope to the bleak society
and as they arise with new vigor
The doom is no more.

Being All You Can Be

Jessica Flores

I saw the greatest minds of my generation screwed over by the unforgiving, blind shrews of fate.

The greatest minds of my generation have not been the intellectuals sitting at Starbucks, reading, sipping lattes and writing what they believe to be some of the most brilliant works of our time. Instead, those poor souls have been sent to war to fight for what they don't believe in, to fight for a wrong cause, to fight because all they wanted was a decent education.

Those who, beyond all shadow of a doubt, are scared shitless to leave the comfort of their home, the love of their mothers, and the warmth of the kitchens of their youths to carry on the values and wishes of a man they have never met. The poor immigrant youth who wants to be all that he can be, enlists in the army-you can earn a college education-to get a better job; to become someone better than his mother, who scrubs the rich fat cat's toilet in order to put food on the table and clothes on her children's backs. He joins the army to be more that just a fruit picker as was his father, who died because he had health problems and no medical insurance or if he did he was afraid to go to the doctor for fear of being deported. This young man, at eighteen, becomes father to his younger siblings. Not knowing how to help his mother, he sits in his room at night, "working" on homework, praying, silently crying and then, there on the television screen, is an ad, an ad for the Army.

The Army offers much to the young man. It offers an opportunity to earn money for college while holding down a decent paying job. It offers honor, pride, and a title in life that no one can take away. The Army offers the opportunity of a lifetime. The Army offers the

answer to this young man's prayers. He can go to college, without taking money away from his mother and his siblings. He can get a job and contribute financially to his family. But there's one small catch the Army commercials didn't tell him about.

Next day, he goes to his nearest recruitment station and signs up for a four year term. *A good education, financially stability here I come!* He walked in a boy, a civilian, walked out a man, a private.

Congratulations, you have now become one of the elite, you can be all you can be; you can now have "Property of the U.S. Government" tattooed on your ass.

In two weeks he is shipped out to boot camp; a month after boot camp, he is dispatched overseas, leaving behind a distraught mother, a life of warmth, comfort and love and going to a wasteland of heat, sand, and loneliness-but all in the name of honor.

Four years later he is back. No longer is he that jovial young man, with a gleam in his eye and a lifetime ahead of him. Now he's a broken man, having seen so many die; die for no reason; die for a cause no one but a stupid, power-hungry, Texan monkey-man believes in. He comes home to find that after years of service, he was and still is an immigrant. After four years of service, the thanks he gets is a deportation notice. Only in death will he get the honor of citizenship. Now he has been banished to a country he does not know, a family he's never met. A stranger in a land that embraces him and knows he has been wronged.

Fate has a funny way of rewarding. The monkey man stays in power, safe behind his million dollar bunkers, speeches and high powered connections; monkey man wins a second term, while the poor immigrant private is screwed over for the service he gave to a country that didn't even care enough to let him stay.

Inequality

Marielos Zeka

Brown skin for life

Black soul held under a weight

Heavier than this one's load

Just because some people aren't born right

Born with a birth mark that consumes

Every chance for equality

Blood thinned by funny jokes

And religious upheaval

Chained to the yolk

Of segregation and oppression

Land matters

It justifies rights

Makes her blood purer than mine

Untitled

Yahtina Nayale Macali

I walk into my mother's closet, filled with picture albums decades old. Piles of old clothes, too small, that she will never wear again. Several beauty queen sashes and titles. These frayed cloth pieces that hold antique meaning cover the dozens of pill containers that hold modern meaning. Prayers and candles, embellished pictures of saints outline an altar. On that altar there are framed obituaries and pictures of dead relatives lying in their caskets.

In my mother's room there is disorder inside of order. Dried flowers on the left, snippets of Woman's Day magazines--lose weight easy--walk away those pounds--organize your life. Eight different calendars, no plans written in the dates. Two alarm clocks two hours slow and not set to alarm.

My mother tells me she feels suffocated. Suffocated by her life. Inside a trap webbed with love.

In my mothers heart she has many grand intentions. In my mothers mind she is alone, even though I am her friend to the end. I see my mother is glorious like the golden sun, her skin is smooth as cream with a splash of Guatemalan coffee. Goodwill and compassion are her design. She loves Jesus. He saved her. I love her. She saved me form the abortion trash can. She loves me the least of all her children.

I am the product of that deep pain that comes when your dreams die. So every day I think about what she has sacrificed for me. I work hard, go to school and earn money. I'm a money maker, hustler, staying on top

of the game, staying paid. I can't get knocked up because if my dreams die I will follow. That is my design.

I told her I wanted to be a writer. She told me, Will you eat your books? You are not white. You are a poor black child. I am not white. I am café au lait. I am rich in spirit I say. If I have to eat books I imagine they taste ok with ketchup.

My mother cries in her sleep because she dreams of when she was happy. She cries because she is poor and cannot leave. She cries because of her children that have died. Her husband has died. Her sister and brother have died. She burns candles for them. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are already dead. Why pray for the dead?

As the story goes, God will be a father to the fatherless. Mother Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaids lowliness; and behold from now on will all ages call me blessed."

One day my mother will finally be free at the right hand of the father draped in a cloak of glory. Her rewards are stored in heaven. Maybe that's why she prays for the dead so that when she dies the dead will receive her with open arms.

Today she cried for her last child that was born deaf, he can hear now so these are tears of Joy. Joy that is her name. Joy comes after weeping. Joy comes after sorrow. Joy that is her name.

"Emptiness"
Amparo Hernandez

When she sees melting ice

upon desolate water lilies,

the reveries of warmth that never stayed

once again, haunt her.

Silky bubbles burst before they land.

Her chewed up wings with tattered veins

seep through out.

They never did flutter.

And memories of disenchanted dreams

fill the showering clouds.

Bitterness is her only permitted scenery.

Her rafter is sinking

into depths deeper

than one could ever explore.

Further into her scalding emptiness she goes...

Working Student

Jennifer Negrete

A working student, a commuter, a caregiver watching
Activities from a distance, the strangers in my family
They passed by, I was almost invisible
So, I sat at the Circle waiting for someone to invite me

I became part of the group, but yet not really
I had some dreams, but there were only mine freely
I wanted to participate, but could not
So I sat at the Circle waiting for someone to invite me.

And now graduation looms straight ahead, and yet
I can't get the detachment out of my head.
Have I missed something that others did not ?
So I sat at the Circle waiting for someone to invite me.

Cada Noche

We lie naked, the day's covers removed.

Rising and falling, we reach for the peak,

The height of freedom, where nothing exists

But you and I. "Ven a mi," soft whisper

The closer the crest comes. "Te quiero

Cada momento de cada día."

You understand without knowing.

Our bodies create this tongue, this language.

It comes to life with each rise and fall. You

First. I will wait. Together we will find

What we seek: sweet release. "Te amo, mi

Amor. Tú eres mi Botticelli."

Listen to the Sky

Sr. Joseph Adele Edwards

Listen to the sky. . .
It speaks
As its outstretched arms enfold you:

"You are you."

Listen to the sky. . .
It sighs
As its gentle breeze touches you:

"Be yourself."

Listen to the sky. . .
It roars
As its thundering voice deafens you;

"Don't look back."

Listen to the sky. . .
It cries
As its purifying tears wash you:

"Forget the pain."

Listen to the sky. . .
It laughs
As its sunny smile warms you:

"Be who you are."

The Voices

Hana Abuershaid is a junior majoring in biology, with an emphasis in pre-med. She enjoys writing creative pieces when she has the time, which is rare. She writes about the realities of the world in her work because she believes that this makes the best reading in the end.

Sister Joseph Adele Edwards, CSJ, is currently Baccalaureate Dean and former faculty member in the English Dept. at the Mount. Her book, The Fabric of Life: Fact, Fiction, and Poetry, was published in 2001. She has also been published in the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter, Sisters of St. Joseph Publications, Ligurorian, Mount Magazine, MSMS Many Voices, Mount Voices, and Peck Road Magazine.

Vanessa Bravo is a fourth year English major. She can currently be found with a cigar in one hand and pulling her hair out with the other, as she accepts her fate of graduation and "the real world." Writing is her source of sanity.

Jessica Flores is a junior at Mount St. Mary's College. She is a child development major with a double minor in English and Spanish. Of Mexican descent, her parents and older brother hail from Mexico, she was born in East L.A. and raised in different parts of Los Angeles.

Elizabeth Galaida is Co-Executive Director of Advocates for Homeless Families, Inc. in Frederick, MD. Her work has appeared in The Hurricane Review, Word Riot, and whimperbang, and will appear in the forth-coming issue of American Letters and Commentary.

Amparo Hernandez is a senior at Mount St. Mary's College and will receive her English degree in May of 2005. She discovered her love for creative writing just last spring. She plans to gain more experience and teach at the middle school level in the near future.

Ileana Hernández is currently finishing her last semester at Mount St. Mary's College. She is majoring in art with a minor in Spanish. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in web design, but also has dreams to one day open an art gallery for children because she loves putting a smile on their faces.

Jenni Hernandez was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She decided she wanted to go to Mount St. Mary's College because she knew the school would provide her with a great education. She will be graduating in December 2005.

Jenny Kane spends much of her time lost in a world outside of conventional language, but enjoys writing prose and poetry to add layers to the dimensions of her artistic career. Having been first published in Mount Voices in 2003, she is honored to be included in this year's edition. In the future, teaching will become her art as she joins the Peace Corps in 2006 and travels to Asia.

Jamie Kazay holds a bachelor's degree in Creative Writing and English from California State University Northridge. A Pasadena native, she is a poet living among the nuances of language, which serve as a vehicle for forward movement.

Ashlei Kramer is a country girl who, to say the least, stood out in the crowd while she attended Mount St. Mary's College. She is now making her way in the world the best way she knows how, with fine food, good company, and great stories one day at time.

Yahti Macali is a sophomore at Mount St. Mary's College. She plans to travel to London and write.

Kristin Maneca is a junior nursing student. She is originally from Waterbury, CT. Along with writing; she loves music and enjoys black and white photography.

Zoran Masirevic was born in 1960, in Serbia. He earned his BA cum laude in film and television directing from the Academy of Fine Arts – FAMU (Prague, Czech Republic) in 1986. Among his over 150 TV programs, short films, and documentaries, are the award winning feature film, THE BORDER (1990), which he directed, and the co-production of the movie, TITO AND ME (1991). He immigrated to the USA in 1992. He is currently a graduate student of Humanities at Mount St. Mary's College.

Jennifer Negrete both works and attends school full time. She also cares for her mother, Dora Negrete. When she came to Mount St. Mary's College Jennifer had high hopes and has reached and excelled beyond her dreams.

Loren Ornelas is a confused biology major who did not want anyone in her biology class to know that she wrote poems. That is, until now.

Denise Resendez is a Spanish major and political science minor graduating in May 2005. She is a native of Los Angeles and loves living here despite the 405. Upon graduating, she looks forward to finding herself and writing about it along the way.

Robert Rieth lives in the San Fernando Valley with his family. He is the proud father of Alexandra "Lulu" Rieth, age 8, and John "Jack" Rieth, age 12. He is also the lucky man who married Margaret Steele.

Marisa Smith is currently an English major at Mount St. Mary's College. She aspires to be the first female Hispanic Mayor of San Diego one day, after paying her dues as a future city councilwoman for district three. She can always be found wearing loud Hawaiian shirts or harassing various members of her close-knit family unit.

Raven Wilson is a junior at Mount St. Mary's College, majoring in sociology with a double minor in English and documentary film. She is planning on a career in the film industry after graduation.

Tiare Kaolelopono is one of the three Hawaiians by blood right at The Mount. She is a strong headed, yet open-minded, graduate of Mililani High School on the island of O'ahu. She enjoys the thrill of debate, acts of rebellion and deep roots in her culture. In her spare time, Ms. Kaolelopono dances hula for Hula Halau 'O Kamuela 'Elua and is a member of Na Mamo: The Young Hawaiians of Southern California, Inc.

Marielos Zeka is.

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"[This collection is] an expression of the volatile world in which we live and an attempt to grapple with the inconsistencies and contradictions that frustrate the sensitive observations of the poet."

This Edition of Mount Voices Features...

Hana Aubershaid
Vanessa Bravo
Sr. Joseph Adele Edwards
Jessica Flores
Elizabeth Galaida
Amparo Hernandez
Ileana Hernandez
Jennifer Hernandez
Jenny Kane
Tiare Kaolelopono
Jamie Kazay
Ashlei Kramer
Yahtina Macali
Kristin Maneca
Zoran Masirevic
Jennifer Negrete
Loren Ornelas
Emily Paulson
Denise Resendez
Bob Rieth
Rebecca Romero
Marisa Smith
Raven Wilson
Marielos Zeka